

## Natural and simple

Breastfeeding is an easy way to be kind to your environment



by Gretchen  
Crumpacker  
Breastfeeding Task  
Force of Greater  
Los Angeles

The Breastfeeding Task Force of Greater Los Angeles is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving the health and well being of infants and families through education, outreach, and advocacy to promote and support breastfeeding. For more information, please visit the Breastfeeding Task Force website at [www.breastfeedla.org](http://www.breastfeedla.org)

Babies were born to be breastfed!

Most people, if you ask them, say that they would do anything they could to protect the environment—they recycle, or maybe they think twice about using disposable diapers because they are concerned about landfills. And I think you'll agree that if you asked any mom "If there was something you could do to benefit the earth without any extra expense or effort on your part—something that would actually save you money—you'd do it, right?" she would say yes immediately. Wouldn't she?

I know I would. So why are the breastfeeding rates still so low? Breastfeeding is an easy, natural way to feed your baby, save money and protect the Earth. Yet many moms, even those who don't have the economic means to easily purchase infant formula, choose to feed their babies with formula despite their ability to breastfeed. And that's just sad—sad for the Earth, sad for the babies, and sad for the moms.

Breast milk is the perfect food for an infant. It's always ready, always exactly the right temperature, and doesn't cost a cent. There are no bottles or nipples to wash, and less spit-up to be washed from baby's clothes—so water is conserved. No formula packaging to dispose of. Nothing is wasted whatsoever. Breast milk is the Earth's perfect food for babies, and when we nurse our babies we are acting in harmony with our planet.

Environmentally minded people know that the best way to protect the Earth is to follow the example of animals. Animals don't harm the planet because

they have none of the trappings of human life, none of the chemicals and waste to dispose of, nothing artificial of any kind. Mammals nurse their babies by instinct.

What else could they do?

It's sort of ironic that human animals, who are meant to be more intelligent than the rest, can be so stupid about something so fundamentally natural and simple. So often people behave as though breastfeeding is odd or offbeat or unusual, or as though it's a deviation from the norm, something to be covered up as though it were shameful. They've got it exactly the wrong way round, of course. It's formula which is unnatural. Unlike breastfeeding, artificial feeding adds to environmental pollution in its manufacture, packaging, transport and preparation. True, some women are honestly unable to breastfeed for a myriad of reasons, all of which are personal and worthy of respect, and it's wonderful that our big human brains have come up with formula as a way to protect these women's babies and feed them in the best alternate form possible. So, in that way, formula is a wonderful thing. What is not so wonderful is the way our thinking got turned around somewhere along the line, so that many people are uncomfortable with women feeding their babies with the food Nature provided for them.

What I try to do is do my little part to

change all that. I'm only one mom, and I can't change the world—but I can change my behavior. I can breastfeed my baby as though it's the most natural thing in the world, and I can help other

breastfeeding moms who might need support or advice or information or a role model. I can breastfeed my babies in front of their older brothers, so that someday those boys will grow up to be husbands and fathers who are supportive of their nursing wives and of nursing

women everywhere. I can exercise my right to breastfeed my baby in public places, and stand up for that right if it's challenged. It's not a matter of being confrontational—I hate confrontations, and I've breastfed four children in public, and never once have I argued with anyone or caused a fuss. I just smile, and feed my baby, and hope other moms will notice



photo: Tanya Young Photography (310) 939.1155 www.TanyaYoung.com

BREASTFEEDING TASK FORCE OF  
GREATER LOS ANGELES

(213) 596-5776

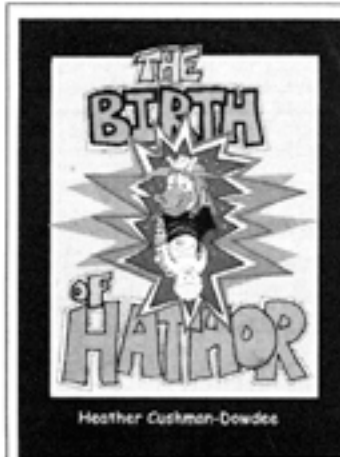
[www.breastfeedla.org](http://www.breastfeedla.org)

and do the same thing.

Funny, I was the first woman in my family to nurse her babies; I was born in 1960, in an era when formula was thought to be superior because the "new, scientific, modern" thing was believed to always be better than the old, folksy, traditional ways. When I had my first child in 1984, my mom was appalled when I mentioned that I intended to breastfeed—that was something hippies did! No one respectable would breastfeed, my mom said. As usual, I didn't argue, just smiled and nursed my baby. When my younger sister had children, she nursed them and Mom didn't think anything of it. My oldest daughter doesn't have children yet, but when she does, she'll know how to feed them—and whom to ask for advice or support if breastfeeding proves challenging for her.

By acting as role model and mentor, every nursing mother can do her part to spread the joy of nursing. And that's not just green—that's beautiful.

The Breastfeeding Task Force of Greater LA offers a variety of opportunities for education for professionals and laypersons alike, through workshops and internet links on its website; learning about legislation as it is being considered to support breastfeeding; and joining forces with others to create the kind of supportive climate we would wish for mothers, babies and families who choose breastfeeding. Consider attending a Breastfeeding Task Force Meeting. Meetings are held quarterly, in Inglewood, from 9am to 12pm, are free and open to mothers and professionals.



## Buy the New Book!

Heather Cushman-Dowdee is the creator of  
Hather the Cowgoddess and the Evolution Revolution

Amusing cartoons and insightful/incite-ful commentary about homebirthing, breastfeeding on demand, maintaining constant contact, sharing space, unschooling, and saving the world.

This book follows the antics through America's 50th state where the comic evolved from paintings, sculptures and performances. Includes the previous thoughts and philosophies that some mother will be enjoying changed text and includes 25 of the earliest cartoons.

[www.thecowgoddess.com](http://www.thecowgoddess.com)